

modified by Christianity ? It looks very much as if the men to initiate and carry out administrative and financial reforms are not forthcoming, and that, unless the Shah is willing to import or borrow them, the present system of official corruption, mendacity, bribery, and obstruction may continue to prevail.

The inherent weakness of Persia lies in her administrative system rather than in her sparse population and paucity of fuel and water, a paucity arising partly out of misgovernment. In the felt evils of this system, and in the idea that law, equitable taxation, and security for the earnings of labour are distinctively European blessings, lies a part of the strength of Eussia in Persia. I have elsewhere remarked upon the indifference with which Eussian annexation is contemplated. A reformed system of administration, by giving the Persian people something to live for and die for, would doubtless evoke the dormant spirit of patriotism, and render foreign conquest, or acquisition without conquest, a less easy task.

After living for ten months among the Persian people, and fully recognising their faults, I should regret to see them absorbed by the "White Czar" or any other power. A country which for more than 2000 years has maintained an independent existence, and which possesses customs, a language, a civilisation, and a nationality of its own, and works no injury to its neighbours, has certainly a *raison d'être*.

My early impressions of Persia were of

effeteness  
and ruin, but as I learned to know more  
of the  
vitality, energy, and industry of her people,  
and of the  
capacities of her prolific soil, I have come to  
regard her  
resurrection under certain circumstances as  
a possibility,  
and cordially to echo the wish eloquently  
expressed by  
the Marquis of Salisbury on the occasion of  
the Shah's  
last visit to England: " We desire above all  
things that